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TEA PARTY PATRIOTS CO-FOUNDER ARRAIGNED
ON GUN POSSESSION CHARGE

Presented Weapon During Check-In At LaGuardia Airport

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that Mark J. Meckler, a co-founder of Tea Party Patriots, has been arrested at LaGuardia Airport and charged with illegally traveling with a pistol. The weapon was discovered during a routine pre-flight check-in this morning.

District Attorney Brown said, "Before leaving home, passengers should acquaint themselves with the weapon laws of the jurisdiction that they are visiting and comply with any and all legal requirements if they choose to travel with a weapon. Otherwise, they may find themselves being arrested and charged with a felony – as is what occurred in this case."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Mark J. Meckler, 49, of Grass Valley, California. Meckler was arraigned this afternoon in Queens Criminal Court on a criminal complaint charging him with second degree criminal possession of a weapon, a Class C felony punishable by up to fifteen years in prison. Meckler was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on January 12, 2012.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Meckler presented a locked gun box to a Delta Airlines ticket agent at approximately 5:20 a.m. this morning, December 15, 2011, during check-in. It is alleged that the box contained a Glock 27 pistol and nineteen 9mm cartridges. Meckler, who has been in New York since Sunday, December 11, 2011, allegedly told authorities that he had the pistol because he gets threats and that he does not have a New York State carry permit.

The investigation was conducted by the Port Authority Police Department.

Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Robert J. Masters is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Trial Division James C. Quinn.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.